

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

IN RELATION

To the organization of the marine corps.

AUGUST 4, 1848.

Ordered to be printed to accompany bill S. No. 341.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, July 28, 1848.

SIR: The termination of the war with Mexico, and the return to the United States of the battalion of marines, after an honorable service with the army, in the operations which ended in the capture of the enemy's capital, have made it necessary to take the proper measures "to reduce the marine corps to a number, both in men and officers, not exceeding the number in service on the 2d March, 1847," as directed by the fourth section of the act of Congress of that date. I have, accordingly, issued orders of the 22d and 27th July, for the discharge of the men; and a board will be organized without delay, to designate four captains, four first and four second lieutenants, to be dismissed the service.

I deem it to be an imperative duty to ask the attention of the Committees on Naval Affairs to the subject of the reduction of the marine corps.

The annexed statement from the adjutant of the marine corps shows, that on the 2d day of March, 1847, the strength of the corps was, in rank and file, 1,283. By the act of Congress of that date, the rank and file was increased to 2,293, while the increase of commanding officers was only twelve; that is to say, four captains, four first and four second lieutenants. The additional officers of the two higher grades were appointed as required by law, by promotion according to seniority. My opinion is, that the interests of the public service will be promoted essentially by continuing a larger number of rank and file, than the number to which the law now requires the corps to be reduced.

The efficiency of ships of war, and the maintenance of discipline are greatly promoted by the marine guard on board. The increase of the number of these guards would conduce to these valuable results, and as a corresponding measure, the complement of landsmen might be advantageously reduced; the marine guard performing

duties now required of landsmen. In guarding and watching the public property at the navy yards and stations in the United States, the marines could be advantageously employed. The limited marine guards allowed to seagoing vessels have absorbed the corps heretofore, and the department has for years been reduced to the necessity of employing persons in civil life as watchmen at the navy yards, on wages on an average exceeding one dollar a day; while a marine guard could be maintained at less than one half of the expense. They are military establishments; the public property intrusted to their watchful care, is of very great value, and there can scarcely be a doubt that the guard should be subject to the restraints and responsibilities of military law.

It must be borne in mind that the marine corps has not a regimental organization. Each vessel of war going to sea has its guard; and this guard, however small, should have at least a commissioned officer and the necessary non-commissioned officers. Hence the proportion of non-commissioned officers is greater than in the army. The annexed copy of a letter from the commandant of the marine corps, will show the number of sergeants and corporals which can be usefully employed with the guards of vessels in commission, and at the several navy yards.

I recommend that the law be so modified as to authorize the number of commissioned and non-commissioned officers, fixed by the act of March 2, 1847, and sixteen hundred men. No increase of field officers is deemed necessary, and the addition of four company officers of each grade is not greater than would be required by an increase of the corps by six hundred men.

It is not unworthy of consideration, that the additional captains and first lieutenants were appointed by promotion from permanent positions in the corps, without its being left to their election, and it would be a harsh measure now to dismiss them from the service, because of the position in which they have been placed by the direction of the law. But this consideration alone would not induce me to make this communication. I consider the increase of the number of non-commissioned officers and men as suggested, beyond that of the old establishment, as of great public importance; and if so increased, the additional company officers will be required.

The views which I have presented of the great utility of increased marine guards in ships of war, are acknowledged and acted on by the principal naval powers of the world; and if the limited reduction recommended shall be authorized, I will reduce the complement of landsmen, with the increase of the marine guard.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
J. Y. MASON.

Hon. D. L. YULEE,

Ch'n Com. Naval Affairs, U. S. Senate.

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE MARINE CORPS,
Adj't and Inspector's Office, Washington, July 1, 1848.

SIR : I have the honor to enclose to you, herewith, the information required in yours of the 29th ultimo.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

P. G. HOWLE,
Adjutant and Inspector.

The Hon. JOHN Y. MASON,
Secretary of the Navy.

Statement exhibiting the strength of the marine corps, as authorized by the various acts of Congress since the organization of the corps, in 1798, to the present time.

	Major.	Captains.	First lieutenants.	Second lieutenants.	Sergeants.	Corporals.	Drummers.	Fifers.	Privates.	Aggregate.
Strength of the marine corps, as authorized by the act approved July 1, 1798, establishing and organizing a corps of marines.....	1	4	16	12	48	48	16	16	720	881
Augmentation under the act of March 2, 1799.....	.....	.....	2	6	8	.....	9	9	170	204
Strength of the corps, as authorized by the act approved March 2, 1799.....	1	4	18	18	56	48	25	25	890	1,085

STATEMENT—Continued.

	Lieutenant colonel.	Major.	Captains.	First lieutenants.	Second lieutenants.	Sergeants.	Corporals.	Drummers.	Fifers.	Privates.	Aggregate.
By an act approved April 22, 1800, a lieutenant colonel was appointed to command the corps, and the office of major abolished.....	1	.....	4	18	18	56	48	25	25	890	1,085
Augmentation under act of March 3, 1809.....	.....	1	2	2	.....	.....	185	.....	.....	594	784
Strength of the corps, as authorized by the act approved March 3, 1809...	1	1	6	20	18	56	233	25	25	1,484	1,869
Augmentation under the act of April 16, 1814.....	.....	1	14	12	20	61	.....	21	21	696	846
Strength of the corps, as authorized by the act approved April 16, 1814 ...	1	2	20	32	38	117	233	46	46	2,180	2,715

STATEMENT—Continued.

	Lieutenant colonel.	Major.	Captains.	First lieutenants.	Second lieutenants.	Sergeants.	Corporals.	Drummers.	Fifers.	Privates.	Aggregate.
Strength of the corps, as authorized by the act approved March 3, 1817...	1	.....	9	24	16	73	73	21	21	750	988

STATEMENT—Continued.

	Colonel.	Commissioned staff.	Lieutenant colonel.	Majors.	Captains.	First lieutenants.	Second lieutenants.	Non-commissioned staff.	Sergeants.	Corporals.	Drummers.	Fifers.	Privates.	Aggregate.
Strength of the corps, as authorized by the act approved June 30, 1834	1	.....	1	4	13	20	20	4	80	80	30	30	1,000	1,283
Augmentation under act of March 2, 1847 .....	.....	4	.....	.....	4	4	4	.....	25	25	25	25	1,000	1,116
Strength of the corps, as authorized by the act of March 2, 1847.....	1	4	1	4	17	24	24	4	105	105	55	55	2,000	2,393

STATEMENT—Continued.

	Non-commissioned staff.	Sergeants.	Corporals.	Musicians.	Drummers.	Fifers.	Privates.	Aggregate.
Number of men authorized to be enlisted in the corps, under the acts of June 30, 1834, and March 2, 1847	4	105	105	.....	55	55	2,000	2,324
Number of enlisted persons in the corps, May 31, 1848.....	4	128	125	23	29	28	1,833	2,170
		23 (more.)	20 (more.)	23 (more.)	26 (less.)	27 (less.)	167 (less.)	154 (less.)

Whole number less than allowed by law on the 31st of May, 1848, 154.

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE MARINE CORPS,
Adjutant and Inspector's Office, Washington, July 1, 1848.

P. G. HOWLE, *Adjutant and Inspector.*

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE MARINE CORPS,
Washington, July 25, 1847.

SIR: I enclose to you tables showing the number of sergeants and corporals required for stations on shore, and for the ships-of-war now in commission. You will see that it exceeds the number allowed by the act of the 2d March, 1847.

There is no doubt that the number required for sea service by the table now enclosed will have to be furnished, say 58 sergeants and 71 corporals, which will leave but 47 sergeants and 34 corporals for the shore stations.

I would therefore say that, at least, the number of non-commissioned officers and musicians provided for by the act of 2d March, 1847, be retained in the service.

I remain, with great respect, yours,

ARCH. HENDERSON,

Brig. General, commandant.

HON. JNO. Y. MASON,
Secretary of the Navy.

Number of sergeants and corporals required for the shore stations.

	Sergeants.	Corporals.
For head-quarters, marine barracks.....	12	12
guard at the navy yard.....	3	3
Brooklyn, New York.....	10	10
Charlestown, Massachusetts.....	10	10
Gosport, Virginia.....	10	10
Philadelphia.....	6	6
Portsmouth, New Hampshire.....	4	4
Pensacola, W. Florida.....	10	10
Total.....	65	65
For vessels in commission.....	58	71
	123	136

P. G. HOWLE,
Adjutant and Inspector.

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE MARINE CORPS,
Adj't and Inspector's office, Washington, July 26, 1848.

Number of sergeants and corporals required for the present vessels in commission, agreeably to the table from the Navy Department, of the 15th October, 1844.

	Sergeants.	Corporals.
For one line-of-battle ship.....	3	4
one razee	3	4
four frigates.....	12	16
twelve sloops	24	24
three steamers (2d class).....	3	6
four brigs.....	4	8
three receiving ships.....	9	9
Total required for vessels in commission..	58	71
For the shore stations.....	65	65
	123	136

P. G. HOWLE,
Adjutant and Inspector.

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE MARINE CORPS,
Adj't and Inspector's office, Washington, July 26, 1848.

